

outlined in the legislation, we would have had an opportunity to discuss and consider the merits of programs like education and cultural exchange and their usefulness for attaining U.S. national security and foreign policy goals. As it stands, it allows the current or a future Administration to establish exemption standards so narrow as to preclude the possibility of accruing the benefits of a broader—but still regulated with an eye to security considerations—exchange of citizens. In abdicating its role in setting standards, the Congress has forgone an opportunity to have a voice in this important aspect of policymaking.

COLONEL KENNETH J. SWEET
HONORED AS LANCE P. SIJAN
AWARD RECIPIENT

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 8, 2002

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, May 16th 2002, the Greater Milwaukee Aerie 4214 Fraternal Order of Eagles will award Colonel Kenneth J. Sweet (Retired) the Lance P. Sijan Award.

Lance P. Sijan was born and raised in the Milwaukee community of Bay View. After graduating from the Air Force Academy in 1965, he went to serve in DeNang, Vietnam where he flew sixty-six combat missions. On his last mission his plane was shot down over enemy territory and, although he evaded the enemy for 6 weeks, rescue efforts failed and he died as a prisoner of war.

Lance was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor along with the Distinguished Flying Cross, two Purple Hearts, two Air Medals and a Certificate of Honorable Service. His courageous service is recognized throughout the country with scholarships and memorials.

Throughout a career that spans over 40 years, Colonel Kenneth J. Sweet (Retired) has served his country faithfully and in the same courageous manner as Lance P. Sijan.

Colonel Sweet's first assignment with the Army Air Corps was at Wheeler Field, Hawaii where he was on guard duty on December 7, 1941 when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. He was among the first to fire a rifle in defense of his country at the start of WWII. After the war ended he became one of the founders of the 128th Air Refueling Wing when the unit gained Federal recognition in 1947.

During the Korean War, Colonel Sweet was active for 21 months, and earned his commission on September 29th, 1961. Retiring in 1982 with 40 years and 8 months of service to his country, Colonel Sweet remains active in the community, advocating for military retiree's in Wisconsin and founding the Wisconsin National Retiree Council in 1983, and has served as its director for 16 years.

So it is with great pride that I thank Colonel Kenneth Sweet for his years of dedicated military service, and congratulate him on receiving the 2002 Lance P. Sijan Award.

SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING
PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE IM-
PORTANCE OF HEALTH CARE
EDUCATION AND HEALTH CARE
COVERAGE MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 7, 2002

Mr. MOORE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my support for H. Con. Res. 271, a resolution calling on the President to designate a National Importance of Health Care Coverage Month.

It is time for the leaders of our country to acknowledge that we are facing, in the near future, a nationwide health care crisis. This crisis will cut across all sectors. Seniors insured by the Medicare program and low-income children insured by the Medicaid program are facing severe cuts in nearly every state. Workers with employer-based insurance will face radically increased premiums, and the uninsured, who are already the most vulnerable will still be without.

The Baby Boomers will soon retire and flood the Medicare program. In preparation for this long-anticipated event, Congress has set forth unrealistic budgets calling for severe cuts in Medicare reimbursement for home health care, hospital services and nursing home services. At the same time, some physicians are refusing to take new Medicare patients due to an illogical and unworkable reimbursement scheme.

Hospitals are closing their doors across the country due to low federal reimbursements and lack of nursing staff. Recently, in my district, all but one hospital emergency room was declared "on diversion"—meaning they were unable to take any more ambulances or emergency patients. Yet, the administration plans to cut the hospital update again this year. We must do all that we can to ensure that this does not happen. I want to enter into the record a letter signed by myself and 24 Blue Dog colleagues asking the Speaker to support adequate reimbursement to all Medicare providers.

Think for a moment if our already crumbling health care infrastructure was challenged by a crisis—a terrorist attack resulting in a large number of casualties or a bioterror attack. The time for us to act—to secure our health care system, in terms of infrastructure, workforce and health insurance coverage—is now.

Approximately 44 million working Americans are uninsured. We in Congress need to realize that continuing to ignore the problem of the uninsured in our country will cost us as a nation—in terms of overall health and financial security.

The uninsured are more likely to delay doctor visits, delay needed care or choose not to receive that care at all. Last year, more than 40% of uninsured adults delayed a necessary medical test or treatment. Twenty percent say that they needed, but did not get, recommended treatment last year. Many who received treatment did so at a hospital emergency room. A third of uninsured children did not see a doctor in the past year.

Delaying, or not receiving health care treatment, can lead to more serious health problems. The uninsured are more likely to be hos-

pitalized for avoidable conditions, such as pneumonia or uncontrolled diabetes. The uninsured who are finally diagnosed with cancer may often be in late stages or beyond treatment.

In addition to health consequences, the financial burden on families can be severe. Debt due to high, unexpected medical bills is one of the primary reasons that families file for bankruptcy. Nearly 30% of uninsured adults say that medical bills had a major adverse impact on their families' lives.

The burden falls on our local communities through our health care safety net—but that safety net is being stretched very thin. Community clinics and public hospitals in my congressional district, and all over the country, are straining under the burden of caring for uninsured Americans. Safety net providers, despite their good work, cannot take the place of quality health management and health insurance.

We know who the uninsured are. And we know where they work. The statistics show us that, overwhelmingly, low income workers in small businesses are the most likely people to be uninsured. According to the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, the working uninsured are most likely to be employed in firms with less than 25 employees.

But we in Congress are not doing a good job telling small businesses about the tax benefits available to small business owners who do the right thing and offer health insurance. A study of employers commissioned by the National Association of Health Underwriters found that small businesses are not always aware of the benefits, tax and otherwise, associated with offering health insurance.

Fifty-seven percent of small employers do not know that health insurance premiums are 100% tax deductible. Sixty-five percent of employers do not realize that health insurance premiums are treated like general business expenses with regard to taxes.

I have seen the Child Health Insurance Program make a difference to kids in my district. But despite the success of the CHIP program, 26% of poor children and 16% of near-poor children remain uninsured. Nine million American children remain uninsured.

Madam Speaker, it is time for our nation to address the health care crisis that is looming on the horizon. Congress needs to act immediately to ensure that our health care system is secure, by adequately funding and maintaining our infrastructure, addressing the workforce shortage, especially that of registered nurses, and ensuring that health care coverage is available and affordable for all Americans.

This resolution is a small part of that effort. Today, we need to take the first step to make the public aware of the importance of health care coverage—to ensure that small businesses are aware of the benefits of health insurance coverage, and that parents know when their children are eligible for Medicaid or CHIP.

Congresswoman WILSON and I are asking the President to designate a National Importance of Health Care Coverage Month to help bring this issue to the forefront of the national health care debate. During that month, I will challenge my colleagues to tell small businesses, parents of children and uninsured people in their congressional districts about the importance of health care coverage, the